

up while we have the opportunity. Remember, without a benefits rating, our veterans aren't even eligible to get on the secret waiting list at the veterans hospitals.

This isn't just about Arizona. It is almost everywhere within the system. This administration has known about this situation for at least a year, yet we hear what we hear. Only now are we really getting to the depths of the problem at the VA nationwide.

With an important national day of remembrance just behind us here in Memorial Day, and now we are coming upon the 70th anniversary of D-day, the invasion of Normandy, where our heroic troops really started the assault on taking back Europe from a regime that was evil, why can't we, the way they marshaled those resources to do that huge, huge invasion, marshal the resources in this country now to help our veterans, in honor of them just past Memorial Day and the upcoming of D-day, with missing files? Instead, let's process them.

THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS) for 5 minutes.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, as a Member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am honored to join with my colleagues from that committee to mark the 70th anniversary of D-day.

Nevada's heroes have played a critical role in our country's armed services throughout history, from the Air Force pilots that have been deployed from Nellis Air Force Base to our National Guard's 1st Squadron, 221st Cavalry Unit that has served in Iraq and Afghanistan. For generations, our democracy has been defended by those who have given so much.

Next week marks the 70th anniversary of the invasion of Normandy. At no other time in history has an amphibious assault occurred on that scale. On June 6, 1944, 156,000 Allied troops landed on the beaches of Normandy knowing that they may not survive, and many didn't. They were bombarded by bullets and shells and bombs, but without hesitation they marched on. In that one day, the United States lost 6,603 brave soldiers.

Nevada Senator Howard Cannon was one of the American heroes who risked his life on that fateful day. He piloted the chief troop-carrier airplane, leading 44 others from Exeter, England, across the English Channel to France. In the middle of a hot June night, at 11:50 p.m. on June 5, he took off, the plane departed, the Stoy Hora, carrying paratroopers who jumped into France just a little while later.

A few days after that, on June 17, Senator Cannon was shot down over the Netherlands and survived 42 days behind enemy lines. He is one of the he-

roes whose story is told in the book and movie "A Bridge Too Far."

I am fortunate that I was able to serve as Senator Cannon's faculty intern here in 1982. Every day in my district office, I have the unique privilege of sitting behind Senator Cannon's desk. It is a constant reminder of the many different forms that heroism takes. From the foot soldier at Normandy struggling against the waves to gain the beach to the switch operator back in the United States ensuring that the communications went through; from the admirals to the privates; from the artillerymen to the spies, there were many heroes who showed up on that day that changed history.

These brave men and women have been called "the Greatest Generation" by Tom Brokaw for a reason. Like many of you, I have family members who fought in World War II: an uncle, a father-in-law, two of my husband's uncles. Their valor and courage stand as an example to all of us as we continue to battle injustice today.

So, to all of those who risked their lives on those beaches in Normandy and beyond and to the families of those who perished on those foreign shores, fighting for democracy and freedom, I say a heartfelt thank you, and our grateful Nation owes you a debt that it can never repay.

□ 1115

LET'S STAND WITH OUR NATION'S HEROES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of our Nation's veterans, the men and women who have put their lives on the line in service to our country.

I was honored to have the opportunity to spend Memorial Day with our troops stationed in Afghanistan. Sharing this most solemn holiday with members of our armed services, who go above and beyond every day, was truly a humbling experience.

It was an experience that reinforced my belief that one of the best ways Americans can pay tribute to the brave men and women who risk their lives fighting for us is to recommit ourselves to our duty to care for them when they return home. That is why I will be introducing three bills to help our troops and veterans.

Too often, we hear that our Nation's heroes, after fighting for our country, come home only to have to fight to get the care, support, and respect they so deserve. We must make sure that the brave men and women who have risked everything for our country are never forgotten or ignored, that we fight for them as they have fought for us.

For one thing, this means fully settling benefit claims in an efficient and

timely manner and making sure that those veterans receive the proper care and compensation.

Currently, the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans' Claims, or CAVC, is the court that veterans must appeal to if they were unfairly denied benefits, but it does not allow veterans access to the same judicial tools available in other Federal courts.

This court is terribly overburdened, with an appeal taking around a year on average, and that is on top of the nearly 4 years that a veteran has already waited by then. That is indefensible.

On the heels of damning reports about the VA's failing our veterans with wait lists that have even led to deaths while veterans wait for service, we must find ways to reduce the backlog and speed up the process.

That is why I have introduced a bill that would allow groups of veterans with similar claims to band together in their appeals. This would be highly efficient for both the VA and veterans by cutting costs, reducing decision times, and providing effective counsel, which many veterans lack under the current system.

This act would allow veterans to have their appeals heard in a class action, as was successfully used by veterans impacted by Agent Orange prior to the creation of the CAVC. For veterans facing disability due to the exposure to burn pits in Afghanistan, this could be an invaluable tool.

Another way to serve our Nation's heroes is by expanding educational opportunities. Veterans deserve the best training, so they don't have to fight for a job after fighting for our country.

Today, I am proposing to improve the post-9/11 GI Bill by expanding eligible expenses to include applications to college, graduate school, and law school, as well as technical and vocational schools. Applications to schools can be as high as \$300 to \$500 in out-of-pocket expenses for veterans returning from overseas.

Let's make it easier for our returning troops to pursue their educational and career goals by allowing our veterans to use the GI Bill to get reimbursed for expenses from applying to school.

Our veterans have tremendous discipline, responsibility, and leadership ability to offer businesses. By having access to educational opportunities, veterans will have the means to keep their job skills up to date and to stay competitive in today's evolving job market.

Finally, families are also impacted when their loved ones are deployed. Military spouses take on much of the burden and deserve great assistance. Currently, the Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program provides up to a \$4,000 educational benefit while the spouse is overseas on active duty.

While we agree that this is a worthwhile benefit, it doesn't even get the